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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Farmer and the New Day. By KENYON L. BUTTERFIELD.
New York: The Macmillan Co., 1919. Pp. ix+311.

Since the purpose of this volume is to express its writer's "convictions concerning the ultimate welfare of the American farmer," and since he is animated by a "desire to see the rural problem as a whole and to discover the fundamentals of its solution," it is obvious that, although it is distinctly the book of a sociologist, much territory in which the economist is interested is embraced at least by implication within the bounds of its discussion.

President Butterfield is not arguing primarily for particular economic measures which would contribute upon the material side to the welfare of the farmer. Chiefly he urges that the socio-political arrangements which have made the farmer in all ages an underling and an outsider in matters of social control must be recast in such a way as to give him a full voice in the shaping of the national life of the future, and that the environmental influences mediated by his level of income, his educational institutions, and his social position must be such as to make this participation in the democratic control of the national destinies wise and safe. Only when farmers sit at the council table of the nation can we expect an adequate national agricultural policy to be forthcoming.

Clearly it was not within the author's purpose to present an analytical study of the economics of agriculture—of land tenure, farm-products prices, rural credits, and the like—but it seems distinctly unfortunate that, instead of stressing the great need of further research and scientific analysis as a prerequisite to sound constructive measures along these lines, he has taken his postulates from a traditional dislike of tenancy as such, an easy faith in cheap loans as a means of redressing the balance in either the capital account or the income sheet of the farmer, and a sentimental price philosophy which assumes that "our system of distributing food products works in general against the farmers' interests."

The remedy prescribed is "organization." We read:

The main object of organizing the rural community is to try to secure the co-operation of all associated effort and individual influence on behalf of a generally accepted plan or program for improving the community at all points. By reason of such co-operative endeavor, should emerge at last a

group of people with one mind as to the desirability of working together for one large purpose and in the finest spirit of co-operation. Remember again that organization is merely the co-operation of all the people. It is an assembling of all factors that make for better working and living together. It implies a group of people working as one. The ideal is the most complete possible co-operation of all individuals and all groups in a small natural area, making their best efforts in the common task of securing the greatest possible improvement in all things that make for the common good [p. 165].

The distinctive feature of the plan proposed lies in its desire to fund all the diverse lines of human endeavor, economic, educational, religious, recreational, etc., under one comprehensive community scheme of organization. From the dedication page forward, there are abundant evidences of the strong influence of the Grange tradition and philosophy. Without wishing in any way to disparage this high ideal we might yet suggest that the Grange has not apparently proved to be the type of organization best fitted to take hold of and retain the active allegiance of that great majority of our rural workers whose affiliation must be secured if the great ends which Dr. Butterfield has sketched are to be achieved. Just as the Knights of Labor and similar grandiose plans for the comprehensive organization of industrial workers have been superseded by narrower but more intense types of unionism, leaving the other activities of the group life to be organized under various other societies, lodges, and what not, whose membership is generally shared in common with representatives of other callings, so it seems probable that a like functional division is becoming clearly marked in agricultural organization, with numerous business associations firmly established in suitable local areas, but affiliating themselves for large-scale efficiency into state, regional, or national organization along this single line of endeavor, while other functions of the same rural group are becoming independently organized according to a similar plan. While the discussion of rural community organization set forth in *The Farmer and the New Day* is extremely interesting and stimulating, it seems to hark back somewhat to the utopian days of Robert Owen and other too-good-to-be-true prospectuses for the perfection of the social compact.

However this may prove to be, the men and women who are to be the active force in the self-realizing and progressive agriculture of tomorrow need, more perhaps than anything else, to be infused with the spirit of Dr. Butterfield's message. The book, both by its style and by its content, is well suited to take a place upon the table of every

reading farm family, in every library with a rural clientèle, and to be incorporated somewhere in the reading assignments of every young man and woman whose college course is supposed to fit them for a rural career.

Space does not permit the mention of more than a few of the many excellent suggestions developed in the course of the discussion. Drawing no doubt upon his own experience, the writer presents some stimulating and pertinent views upon the development of agricultural education, the proper field of government activity, the imperative call for self-help, and the proper relation between local efforts, state institutions, and federal support and control (see chaps. vii and xi). Likewise there are some pregnant words concerning the true nature of rural leadership and the duty of officials of farmers' organizations to "have the courage to tell the farmers at times that they are wrong in their attitude" (pp. 203 ff.).

In an Appendix prepared by Dr. Alexander E. Cance there is presented an outline sketch of a tentative agricultural policy for the United States and a "conference group" by which such a program might be formulated.

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Principles of Government Purchasing. By A. G. THOMAS (Institute for Government Research). New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1919. Pp. 275. \$2.25.

This book is a real contribution to public finance and administration. Basing his proposals upon a study of the purchasing systems of thirty large corporations and American municipalities, the author indicates in practical terms steps toward increased efficiency and economy through centralization of government purchasing.

Compared with the purchasing problem of some of our large industrial corporations, that of any particular city government is a simple one. Yet the decentralization of the purchasing function in governments and the maze of legal restrictions and red tape thrown about the purchasing process has resulted in anything but efficiency and economy. The danger of unfair and corrupt use of centralized power by the government purchasing officer should be guarded against by concentration of responsibility and the fullest light of publicity.

All of our large corporations recognize the value of centralization of purchasing. One of the forms of centralization used by corporations—